You're my Medicine

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Summary:

Quite surprising, really, that of the two of them it's Richie that gets sick more than Eddie. Eddie doesn't think it's surprising at all; it's simply because Eddie takes vitamins daily and wears a jacket when he starts to see frost creep into the corners of his windows in the morning. Richie only puts a jacket on when the temperature starts hitting single digits, and human furnace or not, he's still susceptible to illness. But the true surprise is that sick Richie is more annoying that not-sick Richie, and the Losers all agree that if anyone should be stuck with him when he's sick, it should be Eddie because a) he's the mother of the group, b) Richie's family probably won't take very good care of him, and c) Richie has a soft spot for Eddie and will try and avoid getting him sick as much as possible (opposed to that time when he sneezed into Stan's lunch so they could both be sick together).

(Ben also points out that d) Richie likes Eddie and Eddie likes Richie, which earns him a sharp elbow to the side because "That's not true Ben!")

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Author's Note:

> From a request on my blog @ stenbroughvevo on Tumblr!

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"It's the end for Richard Tozier!" He whines as Eddie rests his hand on his forehead.

"Relax you idiot, your temperature's going down." He sits back on his knees. "It's just a common cold, you'll be at school tomorrow."

"You might be at school tomorrow," He sniffs, obnoxious and wet and Eddie grimaces at the sound, "I'll be dead, Eds."

“If you call me that again I’m leaving.”

Richie ignores him, sitting up. His blanket falls to his lap and Eddie’s face heats up as he finds himself staring at his friend’s angular body; his fingers twitch at his sides, as if dying to trace his collarbones. Eddie thinks back to when he was fighting to get Richie to put on his shirt because *you’re cold! You’re full of goosebumps!* to which Richie responded *I’m also hot though! And you know you like what you see!* (to which Eddie rolled his eyes and looked away so Richie couldn’t see the pink dusting his cheeks). “Eddie,”

“What?”

“I think I see the light,” Richie sighs, eyes focused on something far away. Eddie frowns, but kneels again to put his hand on Richie’s forehead. “I see her.”

“Who?”

“*Her* . God, Eddie. She’s so beautiful.” A sickly smile ghosts his face and he’s not fazed as Eddie shakes him lightly, still transfixed on whoever *she* is. Eddie feels his own stomach hurt and he doesn’t realize that his free hand is gripping the sheets until Richie tries to get up, the sheets pulling with his movements.

“Richie, I think you should lie down again.” Eddie says, and coaxes him down by squeezing his hand and gently ushering him back under the sheet.

He yawns, eyes shutting as he sighs, “She’s so beautiful,” he repeats.

“Who?”

“Your mom.” Richie smiles weakly. “In a sexy nurse outfit.”

Eddie stands up, “I’m leaving now.” He kicks at the mattress lightly, causing Richie to laugh; he feels Richie’s hand reach for his just after Eddie shakes his hand free, and he glances back at Richie.

“Stay for a little longer?”

Eddie sighs, sitting back down. “Fine, just a little bit longer.”

Little bit longer becomes twenty minutes as he sits by Richie and watches him fall asleep, and then an additional thirty because he wants to make sure he stays asleep. But after an hour he carefully untangles Richie's hand from his hair, presses a chaste kiss to Richie's forehead and slips his shoes on.

"Eds?" He hears Richie whisper tiredly.

"Yes?"

"Thanks for taking care of me," His eyes are still closed, but a lopsided smile stretches across his lips. "Be careful when you're climbing outta my window."

Eddie feels his heart flutter at the concern in Richie's voice, and he murmurs a quiet, "Of course, Richie, I'll see you tomorrow," and slides through the window.

And he does see him tomorrow at school, and when Bill asks how he's feeling at lunch, Richie slings an arm around Eddie and kisses his cheek. "I've never been better! Eddie's magic, he cured me of all ailments."

Eddie makes a noise of annoyance, but doesn't try and move away from Richie, "I'm not magic, it was just the Tylenol I gave you."

"Eddie?"

"What?"

"My throat hurts." Richie says for what feels like the twentieth time.

"I know. That's what happens when you get strep throat."

“Can I please have some soup?”

Eddie sighs and runs his fingers through Richie’s hair. “I’ll start some now, okay?”

Richie hums at the touch and nods, wincing as he swallows thickly. “And some bread too?”

“Okay.” Eddie says, turning towards the kitchen.

“A—and more pillows would be nice.”

“Okay.”

“If you could keep putting your hands in my hair, that would be nice too.”

“Okay.”

Richie grabs his hand and brings it to his hair again, “Don’t leave yet.”

“I thought you wanted me to make you soup.”

“Not yet, just—” he pouts, and it kills Eddie. “Cuddle with me?”

“I can’t, you’ll get me sick.” *I want to, though* .

Richie frowns, and it kills Eddie again. “Oh, okay.”

“So, soup?”

“Soup.” Richie repeats, settling back under the blankets.

Eddie brings him the pillows first, then soup twenty minutes later, also returning with his medical fanny pack.

“If you get me sick, I’m going to kill you.”

“You have such a way with words, my friend.” Richie deadpans.

“Shut up and move over.” Eddie says, taking the empty bowl from Richie and setting it on his nightstand. When Richie obliges, Eddie hands him a surgical mask. “Put this on.”

“**Stop being so cute**. You’re adorable, playing doctor like this,” Richie rambles, slipping the thin mask around his ears. “But now how will I kiss you?”

Eddie’s face flushes, and he can tell Richie’s smirking by the way his eyes crinkle. “Do you want to cuddle or not?”

The snarky bites stop and Eddie smiles to himself proudly, before pushing Richie’s chest lightly to get him to lie down; Eddie follows in suit and holds his breath as Richie inches towards him, resting his head on Eddie’s chest (he blinks up at Eddie as he inches closer, as if to ask *is this okay?* and Eddie blinks back as if to say *yes, yes, of course it is. It always is* .)

As promised, Eddie’s hands weave through Richie’s mop of hair, and he doesn’t even mind when Richie’s clammy hands find their way around Eddie’s waist. By the time they fall asleep, however, one of those sickly hands has found it’s way to Eddie’s, and Eddie wakes up to their legs tangled together and their fingers intertwined, and he feels like they’re two puzzle pieces coming together finally, and now they’re complete. But he sees the time and swears because it’s late and he wakes up Richie as he tries to shuffle out of his grip and he feels Richie’s eyes on him as he crawls out the window and Eddie stares right back at him and he feels the puzzle in his chest incomplete again.

The stomach flu is the worst for both of them. Richie didn’t tell any of the Losers that he wasn’t going to be at school, so when Richie isn’t there, Eddie immediately knows that something is wrong. He ditches after lunch and calls Richie at his house.

“Why aren’t you at school? Are you sick again?”

“Yeah.” Richie mumbles.

“Damnit, Richie. I’ll be there in ten minutes. What do you have? Another cold?”

“Stomach flu, I think.”

“You should do more to stop getting sick, you know. Have you even touched those vitamins I’ve given you? Or, maybe try eating more citrus. Or broccoli. Those help your immune system. Or— Jesus, just try and *bathe* once in awhile, Rich.”

“I’m alright, Eddie.” Richie’s voice weakly echoes through the phone. “You don’t have to worry about me. I know you spend a lot of time caring for me, and I really appreciate it. Go back to school, or do whatever you need to do. But you don’t have to stay with me. Thanks for caring all the time, though. You don’t know how much you mean to me.”

Eddie’s frozen. “Oh my god.” He says, grabbing the receiver tighter. “Are you actually dying? Should I call an ambulance?”

Richie laughs. “God, I love you.”

When Eddie get’s there, he’s wearing a surgical mask and kitchen gloves, and he even puts a clothespin on his nose; Richie snorts when he sees him, moving the silver bucket to the side and smiling lazily at him. “You look like an idiot.”

“So do you.” Eddie tells him, sitting down on the foot of the bed. But he doesn’t look like an idiot; his shirt hangs off his shoulders and expose his collarbones in a way Eddie can only describe as unfairly *there* , as if they were fighting to get Eddie’s attention and winning. Richie’s hair is matted to his forehead, and his eyes look tired and sullen on his face but still manage to keep that fire in them that warms Eddie’s chest. He doesn’t look like an idiot, he looks beautiful, and Eddie thinks it’s unfair that someone so sick can look so good. But then it happens.

Richie reaches for the bucket and retches into it. Eddie can hear the sound of Richie's stomach contents being emptied, and Richie yells in disgust as he puts the bucket down.

"Thanks for being here, angel." Richie tells him, breathing heavy as he swallows and shudders at the acidic taste in his mouth.

Eddie's ears go pink at the new pet name he's acquired and he goes to clean the bucket for Richie, despite Richie's warnings because *it's really gross* . And it's really gross, the clothespin does nothing to hide the smell of vomit and he shudders as he scrubs the bucket clean. It's so fucking gross, but so is Richie and Eddie doesn't really know why he stays. He cleans the bucket and sets it down next to Richie, who sighs and asks, "What would I do without you?"

"I have no idea." Eddie tells him, biting his tongue to stop from asking *what would I do without you?*

"Why are you so good to me, anyway?"

Eddie shrugs, bringing a hand into Richie's hair. He shuts his eyes, the way he always does; it's become a routinely thing, and Eddie's noticed that whenever his hands aren't in Richie's hair, he feels uneasy, incomplete. "I don't really know." But he does know, it's what Ben was telling him earlier— he likes Richie. But Eddie would rather get sick than admit that.

Still, Eddie isn't as subtle as he'd like to be, and maybe it's the fever brain he's got, but Richie takes Eddie's hand from his hair and kisses it. "I love you."

"Yeah, I love you too." Eddie mumbles, but Richie doesn't let go.

"No, I mean I— I *like* you."

They're friends, and they have been for years. Of course they love each other, but Eddie's heart stops when Richie says that. Richie *likes* him. Love is one thing, but *liking* someone?

"Oh." Eddie says. "I like you too."

Richie falls asleep moments later, and Eddie stays there, stroking Richie's hair. Even after school ends, even past dinner. When he does leave, Eddie's mom asks where he's been and he simply replies, "Richie's." And goes into his room to brush his teeth because *can you get the flu from kissing someone with it?*

It turns out you can get the flu from kissing someone with it, and Eddie sits in bed with his arms folded over his chest. Richie laughs as he brings back the bucket and sets it next to Eddie, kissing his hair and sitting next to him on the bed.

"Don't. I'll get you sick."

"No you won't, now that I'm better, my immune system is back to normal. I won't get sick, so kissing you is okay."

"I don't think that's how it works." Eddie frowns at him. "Besides, I've been throwing up all day."

Richie pulls him closer. "Still kissable to me." he grins as he presses his lips onto Eddie's.

"You're disgusting." Eddie tells him, but doesn't pull away.